

Relational Knowing, Meanings of Embodied Values, Visual Representations: A response to Joan Walton, 16.07.12

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Abstract

Propositional and dialectical forms of representation have a 2,500 history of use in the language and logic of Western Academies. The widespread use of digital technologies, including video, has offered self-study researchers and living theorists unprecedented opportunities to gather and analyse data in which they can see themselves within a relationally dynamic awareness of space and living boundaries. In seeing their existence within such relationships they can also use visual narratives to clarify and communicate meanings of their energy-flowing values in the explanatory principles they use to explain their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations in which we live and work. Using a process of empathetic resonance with video-data, new meanings of relationally dynamic values are offered as explanatory principles and living standards of judgment that can extend and transform propositional and dialectical forms of representation and ways of thinking into inclusional ways of being and knowledge-creation that are useful in exploring the implications of asking, researching and answering questions of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?' in the generation of living-educational-theories.

Context

Whilst working for the past 39 years as an educational researcher and supervisor of research degrees in Universities I have lived within the power relations that influence what counts as educational knowledge. In these power relations I have experienced changes in University regulations in the early 1990s from those that forbade the questioning of examiners' judgments under any circumstances to those that allowed such questioning on the grounds of bias, prejudice and inadequate assessment.

I have seen responses from University Research Committees that have required potential doctoral researchers to remove the 'I' from the titles of their enquiries of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?' before their research proposal can be accepted. I have also seen Universities around the world accrediting doctoral degrees for living educational theories that include 'I' within the titles of the doctoral theses.

As a member of a Senate Committee looking into the regulations governing the submission of research degrees I contributed to a recommendation in 2004 that the regulations be changed to accept multi-media accounts. This was accepted by Senate. Living through the above experiences has made me aware of the validity of MacIntyre's (1988) point that:

"The rival claims to truth of contending traditions of enquiry depend for their vindication upon the adequacy and the explanatory power of the histories which the resources of each of those traditions in conflict enable their adherents to write." (p. 403)

This awareness focused my intention to contribute to a transformation in what counted as educational knowledge in the Academy. I decided to make this contribution by focusing on the adequacy and explanatory power of the explanations

produced by doctoral and master's researchers of their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations in which we live and work. Hence, through my research into my own educational practices, and my supervision of the research programmes of others, this contribution can be seen in the living theory resources on my web-site at <http://www.actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml> .

At the heart of this contribution to educational knowledge is an understanding of what Lather refers to as 'ironic validity'. In coming to terms with being an editor of Educational Researcher, in an era of paradigm proliferation, Donmoyer contrasts Lather's notion of ironic validity with Miles and Huberman's relatively traditional conception of validity:

First the practical problem: Today there is as much variation among qualitative researchers as there is between qualitative and quantitatively orientated scholars. Anyone doubting this claim need only compare Miles and Huberman's (1994) relatively traditional conception of validity <'The meanings emerging from the data have to be tested for their plausibility, their sturdiness, their 'confirmability' – that is, their validity' (p.11)> with Lather's discussion of ironic validity:

“Contrary to dominant validity practices where the rhetorical nature of scientific claims is masked with methodological assurances, a strategy of ironic validity proliferates forms, recognizing that they are rhetorical and without foundation, postepistemic, lacking in epistemological support. The text is resituated as a representation of its 'failure to represent what it points toward but can never reach.... (Lather, 1994, p. 40-41)'.” (Donmoyer, 1996 p.21.)

This paper presents evidence to show that multi-media representations of energy-flowing values in the explanatory principles used to explain educational influences in learning can get closer to communicating the meanings of the embodied knowledge of practitioners, than can be done within propositional and/or dialectical forms of representation.

I begin by offering two video clips from the urls below. The first image is of Nigel Harrison at the Conversation Café of the 4th July 2012. The second is of Sigrid Gjotterud and Jack Whitehead in conversation on the 5th July 2012 about 'relational knowing'. I'm not expecting you to view all of the two video-clips. However I would appreciate you clicking on the urls in your browser and watching each for a few seconds to focus your attention on the expressions of the energy-flowing values and embodied knowledges I am hoping will evolve in the course of clarifying and communicating their meanings in a publically sharable discourse.

This focus on embodied expressions of meaning is important to what I am saying because I am claiming that my use of visual narrative enables me to get closer to producing a valid explanation of educational influences than my sole use of propositional and/or dialectical printed texts, could do.



25:14 minute video of the Conversation Café on the 4th July 2012 at
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XA9xQJDDp_4&feature=youtu.be



7:27 minutes video extract of a conversation between Sigrid Gjotterud and Jack Whitehead on the 5th July 2012 in Bath, UK at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tlp2-1IC4dM>

Introduction

On 15 Jul 2012, Joan Walton responded to viewing the above video of a Conversation Cafe of the 4th July that included, Nigel Harrison, Christine Jones, Lynn Bird, Marie Huxtable, Andrew Henon and myself. The conversation was one of a weekly gathering known as our Café Conversation, started by Nigel Harrison, Christine Jones and Marie Huxtable in 2005 to facilitate some open conversations in the workplace.

Joan's responses are in the 5 sections below. My responses to Joan are in italics.

Dear Nigel and Jack (and please feel free to send this on to others involved in the dialogue whom you think may be interested),

I have watched the video of your conversation (at the Wed a.m. conversation cafe?) with great interest, and here are some immediate comments.

1) Jack, I continue to reflect on the role of 'visual data' in relation to its contribution to the creation of new knowledge. At the beginning, you say that both Nigel and I 'default back into' traditional scholarly writing. I don't think that is an accurate description of how I see it. 'Default back into' suggests to me that it is almost an automatic response, that happens through custom and practice rather than through choice. However the 'traditional scholarly approach' - or perhaps the way I would phrase it would be to say 'the use of words supported by various kinds of academic and other evidence' is the medium that I have to date found the most effective when aiming to communicate learning and ideas to others. I am aware that it is by no means perfect - I prefer talking to people face to face when there can be proper dialogue (which means small numbers); and when in an educational setting facilitating interactive events. But in the main when communicating to a large audience who are a distance away (such as in journals), I cannot replace traditional forms of writing. Some can use, for example fiction, to cleverly communicate messages - I am not that clever! I also think that there is no perfect medium for communicating/articulating most of the profound and embodied knowledge that many of us have learned and created over many years, gained purely as a consequence of living this human life.

I completely agree that visual data has a role to play. For me, though, it is to provide evidence of a claim I have first made in writing. So the example I have given a few times now - if Nigel is making a claim to empower Sandra, and states that as a consequence, she has developed a confidence in contributing to meetings in ways that she was not previously able to do, then including the video clip where she is as 'high as a kite' because of her feelings of euphoria having contributed well in that meeting, is undoubtedly effective and relevant.

What I mean by a 'default back into' traditional scholarly writing, may not be an appropriate expression to use in developing a shared communication. What I mean is that I experience both yourself and Nigel using visual data as evidence for a claim that you first make in writing. You make this point about first making a claim in writing. I believe that a movement is taking place in contributions to educational knowledge where visual data is beginning to be accepted as necessary to the claim to knowledge and not only as additional supporting evidence for the written claim to knowledge. I am agreeing with you that with the point about Sandra then the video-

clip is supporting a claim made in writing about developing a confidence. What I'm going to try to show below is that visual data is necessary in enhancing the validity of explanations of educational influence that include energy-flowing values.

However I am not sure how far we can go with this. You have been talking to me about my relationship with A over the last 18 months. Now although I often back off when A and others say it, I do actually accept that I have played a critical role in Ash moving away from what was essentially a suicidal path and certainly giving up university, to her present position of success (and if she can keep the determination going, she has a huge amount to contribute in many ways). If I were to attempt to analyse what that process was about in relation to the contribution made through my support of her, and our relationship, I would be exploring huge subtleties in all kinds of things. For example, I have spent ages just considering and re-considering what to write in emails knowing how easily I could get it wrong Do you know I cannot even write what I am meaning in detail here, it would take too long - because the subtleties are so great in terms of choices I have had carefully to make each step along the way to ensure I don't lose her, but provide a form of support that she can both use and trust..... All I know is that very little of that process could have been caught on video.

If the video happened to be on at particular times of interaction between A and myself, I am absolutely sure that you could pick out a quality of relationship and connection that would communicate something that could not be communicated in words. Just seeing myself and A in visual form could undoubtedly give a colour, depth and vibrancy to the written account, that could not be communicated in any other way. However.....I think the visual clips themselves would be very limited without the story - and the less detail the story was told, then the less knowledge would be created. I think that what can be communicated by the visual data is in itself quite limited; and that the impact of the visual data is only relative to the extent and depth to which the writer is able to communicate what is going on, often 'underneath the surface' of observable behaviour. So if I were looking at how I could communicate knowledge generated around the work I have done with A, and aim to perhaps open it up to the possible learning that would have a relevance for many other situations, I would phrase my question something like: "How do I create an environment in which another person can feel sufficiently supported to have the strength, courage and determination to face up to and deal with the many life issues that are challenging them, and who in the meantime have become habituated to certain (self-) destructive behaviours as an (often unconscious) alternative to facing up to these life challenges?". (Actually I think this is a question that could apply to many, many people with various forms of addictive behaviours who have not reached the extreme edges as A has).

I like your question very much:

"How do I create an environment in which another person can feel sufficiently supported to have the strength, courage and determination to face up to and deal with the many life issues that are challenging them, and who in the meantime have become habituated to certain (self-) destructive behaviours as an (often unconscious) alternative to facing up to these life challenges?"

In explaining how you contribute to the creation of such an environment that is

supportive to those who have become habituated to self-destructive behaviours, I suspect that you might need to use visual data to communicate the meanings of your self-regulating emotions and understandings. I make this point because Kate Kemp is working on the communication and influence of emotional self-regulation from her work in a BESD Special School for her master's dissertation.

So as I seem to be saying very often these days: I do understand and fully accept that visual data has its part to play in evidencing claims to knowledge. I just have difficulty giving it primacy, in a way that sees traditional scholarly writing as something that is defaulted into; rather than exploring what the nature of the relationship is and should be between traditional scholarly writing, and newer forms of communication / generating of evidence such as video clips.

I'm agreeing with you that visual data has its part to play in evidencing claims to knowledge. We may differ in our understanding of the part that it plays. I'm agreeing with you about exploring what the nature of the relationship is and should be between traditional scholarly writing and newer forms of communication. What I'm hoping to establish below is that the primacy of visual data should be given in establishing the meanings of the embodied expressions of energy-flowing values (and possibly their attendant emotions). I do give primacy to traditional scholarly writing in helping me to understand the sociohistorical and sociocultural influences in myself and on the constraints and opportunities in the environment within which I work and research.

2) I think Nigel can definitely give video evidence which shows how humour has been used to either enhance a relationship, or ease tension in a difficult situation, or enable someone to feel relaxedIt can be used in all kinds of ways. But I think that depends very much on Nigel working out for himself what his values are, what he is trying to achieve in his role and relationships, identify the role that humour plays: and then show what he means by providing examples of what he is doing through video evidence. I hear you use phrases like 'energy with values' - and I know what you mean because I have known you for a long time, and can work out your meaning - but I do think that if living theories are to be communicated in an accessible form to the wider community, there has to be much more explanation which enable those not used to you are a person to understand (and more importantly feel and experience) the meaning.

I'm agreeing with you about Nigel working out for himself what his values are. Where I think we might differ is where you say 'and then show what he means by providing examples of what he is doing through video evidence'. I'm thinking that Nigel (and others, including myself), can use visual data of our practice to both clarify and evolve our values. We probably differ in our respective beliefs about the capacity of verbal or written language to communicate the meanings of our values. In his one lecture on ethics Wittgenstein commented that, 'about that which we cannot speak we must remain silent' in a reference to ethics. However, Wittgenstein didn't have the benefits of digital technology to study ourselves in action and to point to the ostensive expressions of meaning (as distinct from lexical definitions of meaning). I think that Marie, in her doctorate, has communicated how to use video to clarify and communicate the meanings of embodied, energy-flowing values in living boundaries. With visual narratives I think that we can show, clarify and communicate the meanings of the expressions of our living and evolving values.

3) A member of your group (sorry I am not sure who it was) spoke of there being a cord between people - "a quick look will do something about growing the relationship, and the understanding between two people, who already react with each other - and it lifts your confidence, increases trust levels - it's like a secret club in some ways" - spoke of a deep rope that joins people - and can be done in an unnoticeable way.....

I think this is so true! And I think that some of the deepest communication takes place either in ways that a video will not capture (happens in a way not noticed by those 'not in the club'), or it really is lucky if it is on at the right time and on the right people for it to be caught...which is statistically not going to be many times at all. I absolutely know that the significant times between myself and A, for example, were going on at a much deeper level than video could capture; and on other occasions, the presence of the 'observer' would have changed the event, and the really significant, subtle exchange would not have happened.

The member of the group is Lynn Bird, Lynn got married on the 7th July and is on her honeymoon. I think that Lynn's sensitive understandings of relational communications on the 5th July might have something to do with her heightened awareness of the importance of relationships in living a fulfilling life.



See Lynn Bird at 7:08-8:21 minutes at:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XA9xQJDDp_4&feature=youtu.be

I think that this clip of Lynn between 7:08-8:21 minutes helps to make my point about the importance of visual data not only as something that is an 'add-on' to the language, but that is necessary to a valid communication of the meanings being expressed in the language.

I think that you are right that some of the deepest communications take place in ways that video cannot capture. I think that this is related to ironic validity. No matter what forms of representation I use to communicate the nature of something, they are not the thing itself. What I am claiming is that the visual data can help us to get closer to communicating the nature of energy-flowing values in educational spaces and relationships than can words on their own. I'm also understanding that words are also significant in communicating most meanings.

4) Jack referred to my 'sense of responsibility for the well-being of all', saying he felt Nigel had that also. Immediately after, Nigel talks about getting out of the car to help the woman with the child in the wheelchair. Unlike Andy, I did not see this as a reflex action. I saw it as Nigel, committed to a 'sense of responsibility for the well-being of all' (though I don't want to assume that Nigel completely accepts for himself my phraseology of course) - being presented with a situation which touched this integrated sense of responsibility. Countered to this was his sense of obligation to others caught in the queue; the active dilemma in his mind was, would he be causing others problems if he moved to help, and (for example) before he got back the blockage might be cleared and the traffic waiting to move?; but his quick thinking and (I would suggest) his 'risk assessment' decided that it was worth the risk of holding up traffic to enable him to fulfill his sense of responsibility to help a human being who was struggling. There is something here about his integrated over time / now embodied sense of responsibility that can be evidenced by his response to the woman, especially as there are other factors present which make him hesitate, and indeed if left much longer may have meant the latter proved stronger than the former. I don't think video is needed to communicate the significance of this?

I agree, I think that this story, in written text, is sufficient to communicate Nigel's expression of a responsibility for the well-being of all. However, in the expression of this responsibility, Nigel had to engage in emotional self-regulation. Some of this will have been expressed in his body-language, rather than in the above narrative. I suspect that an understanding of the nature of Nigel's emotional self-regulation during this expression of his responsibility for (or towards) the well being of all would be enhanced with visual data of this emotional self-regulation.

5) Jack, towards the end of the conversation, you introduce the concept of 'presencing' that I think Keith Kinsella has used as a central concept in his thesis. I think I would like you to clarify exactly how you are using it, as I have heard you mention it several times in the last week or two. 'Presencing' is a concept introduced by Otto Sharmar and others - I mention it in my own thesis (I will attach the relevant section) - and it has all kinds of connotations that I am not sure that you intend when you are using it. It would take too long to expand on what I mean here - but I will attach some information and links below, which may help you to understand why I think this is a huge term to be introducing here, and I don't think can be used without being developed within a context. And I am not sure the context (which for me involves a **practice** which gets close to being meditative / accessing deeper parts of self) is one that you are particularly meaning here?

Anyway I think that is enough from me this (not very sunny) Sunday afternoon.

Love, Joan

After at least five years of working with doctoral researchers each of whom have to make original contributions to knowledge in the award of their doctorates I've got some way towards understanding the original contributions in each thesis. In Keith's research his original contribution was in the answer to his question 'How has presencing empathetic responsiveness to requisite situated practice' become a standard of judgement in my online coaching practice in higher education?

I know that you have asked me to clarify 'exactly how I am using it' – the idea of presencing.

Given that I don't believe that value-words have exact meanings because, like Wittgenstein, I believe that the meanings of the words we use are influenced by the context of their use. What I'm wondering is whether the conversation with Sigrid Gjøtterud might help to clarify how I am using 'presencing'. I've included as an Appendix some writings from the 10th July that refer to a video-taped conversation:

Sigrid Gjøtterud and Jack Whitehead: How are we presencing and evolving our understanding of relational knowing as professional educators and educational researchers?

The image (and video-clip) of Sigrid and myself above, just below the image and video-clip of Nigel was taken at the end of the 7:27 minute video-clip where Sigrid is referring to the inspiration of reading the living theories of others and that this explains why we share our stories. At the moment that Sigrid is expressing this point about inspiration I feel that she is fully present in the sense of a flow of life-affirming energy with values that I associate with carrying hope for the future of humanity. I believe that Sigrid and I can be experienced by others as pooling the energy that Sonia refers to. So, at this moment of this expression I am referring to a co-creative presencing of a pooling of life-affirming energy. I'm working with Sigrid to clarify our understandings of the idea of 'Relational Knowing' that Sigrid writes about in the Appendix of the Appendix. I can use the words 'pooling of energy' to try to communicate my meaning, but I believe that the expressions of the embodied pooling of energy communicated through both the video and the words I use get much closer to what I am meaning by presencing a pooling of life-affirming energy. I know that in the paragraph below, Presence is defined an intimate look at the development of a new theory about change and learning. I am not using Presence in this way. I am using presencing in the way I have described above with the help of visual data.

Presence: Human Purpose and the Field of the Future

Presence is an intimate look at the development of a new theory about change and learning. In wide-ranging conversations held over a year and a half, organizational learning pioneers Peter Senge, C. Otto Scharmer, Joseph Jaworski, and Betty Sue Flowers explored the nature of transformational change—how it arises, and the fresh possibilities it offers a world dangerously out of balance. The book introduces the idea of “presence”—a concept borrowed from the natural world that the whole is entirely present in any of its parts—to the worlds of business, education, government, and leadership. Too often, the authors found, we remain stuck in old patterns of seeing and acting. By encouraging deeper levels of learning, we create an awareness of the larger whole, leading to actions that can help to shape its evolution and our future. Drawing on the wisdom and experience of 150 scientists, social leaders, and

entrepreneurs, including Brian Arthur, Rupert Sheldrake, Buckminster Fuller, Lao Tzu, and Carl Jung, *Presence* is both revolutionary in its exploration and hopeful in its message. This astonishing and completely original work goes on to define the capabilities that underlie our ability to see, sense, and realize new possibilities—in ourselves, in our institutions and organizations, and in society itself.

<http://www.emerging-leadership.com/Documents/Books/Presence.pdf>

<https://www.presencing.com/programs/introduction-theory-u-and-presencing-2012>

References

Donmoyer, R. (1996) Educational Research in an Era of Paradigm Proliferation: What's a Journal Editor to Do? *Educational Researcher*, Vol. 25, No.2, pp. 19-25

MacIntyre, A. (1988) *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* London; Duckworth.

Love Jack.

Appendix

Sigrud Gjøtterud and Jack Whitehead: How are we presencing and evolving our understanding of relational knowing as professional educators and educational researchers?

Jack Whitehead's initial draft as a letter to Sigrud on the 10th July 2012.

Dear Sigrud,

I'd like to continue our conversation of the 5th July by seeing if I can get closer to developing and sharing my understanding (a co-created understanding?) of your enquiry into relational knowing with the notes you produced on the 6th July (Appendix 1)

I'm focusing on a 7:27 minute clip from the 38:36 minute videoed conversation of the 5th July with the final frame below where you are referring to the inspiration of sharing one's own life-story or living theory with others and of listening to the life-stories of others.



7:27 minutes of a conversation between Sigrud Gjøtterud and Jack Whitehead on the 5th July 2012 at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tlp2-1IC4dM>

I'm also responding to the following questions you asked in your notes of the 6th July, with ideas that include insights from the work of Barbara Thayer-Bacon (2005) on 'Relational (e)pistemologies' and from the work of Noriyuki Inoue (2012) on 'Mirrors of the Mind: Introduction to Mindful Ways of Thinking Education.' In these initial responses I'm also bearing in mind my desire to communicate our ideas to a wider audience.

Your questions and ideas are **in bold** and my responses are in normal type. I think that my responses are grounded in my relational knowing with you and in my engagement with the ideas of others. By relational knowing with you I mean that my responses include the relationally dynamic awareness between us as shown in the video and the expressions of the meanings of the energy-flowing values I believe that we are both expressing through our receptive-responsive communications.

What is it in the learner-teacher relationship that is so important for learning?

I think that we are both expressing what is important in the learner-teacher relationship in our relationship shown on the video. What I mean by this is that we are communicating to each other a recognition of the value of the other in Fukuyama's sense:

Human beings seek recognition of their own worth, or of the people, things, or principles that they invest with worth. The desire for recognition, and the accompanying emotions of anger, shame and pride, are parts of the human personality critical to political life. According to Hegel, they are what drives the whole historical process. (Fukuyama, 1992, p. xvii)

I think that we also communicate our passions and delight in engaging in enquiry learning where we are receptive to each others' questions, concerns and ideas and responsive to supporting the other in taking their enquiry forward. I believe that we express ourselves in a way that Gadamer (1975) would recognize as the dialect of expressing the art of conversation:

"To conduct a conversation requires first of all that the partners to it do not talk at cross purposes. Hence its necessary structure is that of question and answer. The first condition of the art of conversation is to ensure that the other person is with us.... To conduct a conversation.... requires that one does not try to out-argue the other person, but that one really considers the weight of the other's opinion. Hence it is an art of testing. But the art of testing is the art of questioning. For we have seen that to question means to lay open, to place in the open. As against the solidity of opinions, questioning makes the object and all its possibilities fluid. A person who possesses the 'art' of questioning is a person who is able to prevent the suppression of questions by the dominant opinion.... **Thus the meaning of a sentence is relative to the question to which it is a reply** (my emphasis) , i.e. it necessarily goes beyond what is said in it. The logic of the human sciences is, then, as appears from what we have said a logic of the question. Despite Plato we are not very ready for such a logic." (pp. 330-333)

I am also responding to your question '**What is it in the learner-teacher relationship that is so important for learning?**' with the suggestion that we take seriously Biesta's (2006) point about the need to develop a language of education in the age of learning. Biesta has this to say about the language of learning:

“The main problem with the new language of learning is that it has facilitated a redescription of the process of education in terms of an economic transaction, that is, a transaction in which (1) the learner is the (potential) consumer, the one who has certain “needs”, in which (2) the teacher, the educator, or the educational institution is seen as the provider, that is, the one who is there to meet the needs of the learner, and where (3) education itself becomes a commodity – a “thing” – to be provided or delivered by the teacher or educational institution and to be consumed by the learner.” (pp. 19-20)

He emphasizes the importance of the following expression of an educational responsibility which I believe that you and I share:

I have shown that the world in which we come into presence is a world of plurality and difference, because we can only come into the world if others, who are not like us, take up our beginnings in such a way that they can bring their beginnings into the world as well. I have therefore argued that the educational responsibility is not only a responsibility for the coming into the world of unique and singular beings; it is also a responsibility for the world as a world of plurality and difference. The creation of such a world, the creation of a worldly space, is not something that can be done in a straightforward manner. It rather entails a “double duty” for the creation of worldly spaces and for their undoing. Along these lines I have tried to articulate a way to understand education that itself responds to the challenges we are faced with today, including the disappearance of a language of education in the age of learning.” (pp. 117-118)

In our conversation shown in the video clip I believe that we are expressing an educational responsibility towards each other in which we are accepting our responsibility for coming into the world as unique and singular beings and our responsibility for the world as a world of plurality and difference. As I watch the video I am aware of the importance of the expressions of changing flows of values-laden energy as we receptively respond to each others’ communications. I shall keep referring to these embodied expressions between us as I believe that they are fundamentally important in answers to your questions.

What kind of knowledge does the teacher possess that inspires the learner?

In my initial answer to your question I want to include in our conversation some ideas from an East Asian Epistemology that I believe we express through our embodied knowledge, but that are often omitted from Western ways of thinking. In answer to your question I am referring to your idea of ‘relational knowing’ (Appendix) with a desire to clarify this idea. To help with this clarification I am suggesting that your idea of ‘relational knowing’ can be related to Barbara Thayer-Bacon’s (2003) idea of ‘Relational (e)pistemology’.

Here are 6 ideas of *Kizuki*, *Omoi*, *Takumi*, *Ba*, *Kizuna* and *Chi* (Appendix 2) from an East Asian Epistemology (Inoue, 2012) that might be helpful in clarifying the nature of ‘relational knowing’. *Kizuki* is a path to embrace mindfulness in our lives. *Omoi* is an integrate form of feeling, thinking, and passion developed by going through challenges and collective experiences that create *jikkan* or a gut feeling. *Takumi*

implies a skill that involves deep wisdom on how to do things well in a professional practice, backed by long-term experience in the practice. *Ba* is co-constructed by the participants in the communicate space with an understanding that it is for engaging in organic dialogues and co-constructing a new understanding (or *kizuki*) of the targeted issue with others.

Kizuna is created among people when they share the same experiences in the long run and go through important challenges in life together. It is more than just a friendship or an alliance between people. It is a stronger bond that often lasts one's lifetime and cannot be easily wiped away from one's memory. *Chi* (or *qi*), is a word that refers to the energy that sustains your life or the life force that motivates you to act in the world.

Inoue (2012, p. 101) points out that the study of the roles of these culturally shared meanings in human intellectual activities and development is called *semiotics*. In responding to your questions I shall bear in mind that culture nurtures us to develop a set of knowledge, skill and mental sets that are valued and respected in the culture (Bruner, 1996; Cole, 1998). I agree with Inoue that culture creates a powerful source of learning and that this is why it is important to include one's sociocultural understandings in one's epistemological perspective. I shall take some care in checking that I am communicating the meaning of the relationship I establish between sign and what a sign signifies, especially in my use of visual data to communicate my meanings. By doing this I hope to minimize confusions that could arise between us about what my culturally influenced representations signify and about how we might want to share and use these meanings across the living boundaries of different cultures.

In addressing your question, **What kind of knowledge does the teacher possess that inspires the learner?** I return to the 7:27 minute video-clip to communicate my present understanding of this knowledge as 'relational knowing'.

In describing what I see in the video I am aware that my descriptions also include the explanatory principles that can explain the influence of our relational knowing in my own learning. I see that we both love what we are doing in education. I see this love being expressed as a flow of values-laden energy. In selecting the image above at the moment you are saying that we share stories because they inspire us, your expression of life-affirming energy with pleasure, evokes my own. When Tillich writes about ontological security, I am feeling this security in the shared expression of loving what we are doing, with pleasure. Tillich helps me to communicate, in my non-theistic perspective the meaning of this experience when he writes, from his theistic perspective about being grasped by the power of being-itself:

Faith is not a theoretical affirmation of something uncertain, it is the existential acceptance of something transcending ordinary experience. Faith is not an opinion but a state. It is the state of being grasped by the power of being which transcends everything that is and in which everything that is participates. He who is grasped by this power is able to affirm himself because he knows that he is affirmed by the power of being-itself. In this point mystical experience and personal encounter are identical. In both of them faith is the basis of the courage to be. (Tillich, 1962, p,168)

In the video I experience our communication as showing our love for our subject, the education of our students and ourselves. Using the language of Thayer-Bacon (2003) I see you and I attending carefully to what our subject is trying to tell us, as we listen humbly and compassionately to each other and our subject. Our love of our subjects enhances our awareness of our influences on our observations and our critiques of our own projections on to the data. Our love of our subjects raises questions about basic distinctions between the observer and the observed and encourages us to reexamine any assumptions we are making of universality, objectivity, and neutrality. In our relational knowing we see ourselves within a unified, connected world that is dynamic and alive, always changing and in flux. *It is a complementary, complex world that we can only hope to begin to understand if we approach our inquiring with compassion and humility, in cooperation with each other.* (Thayer-Bacon, 2003, p. 242).

Like Thayer-Bacon in seeing that a relational (e)pistemology is supported by a relational ontology, the unifying spiritual belief is that we are one with the universe, I understand our relational knowing to be supported by our relational ontologies (Thayer-Bacon, 2003, p. 259). I also identify, in my experience and understanding of relational knowing with Thayer-Bacon's insistence that knowers/subjects are fallible, that our criteria are corrigible, and that our standards are socially constructed, and thus continually in need of critique and reconstruction. I see my initial answers to your questions as part of an enquiry into the nature of the explanatory principles that can be used to explain the educational influences of individuals in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations in which we live and work. I see these answers as part of a continuing journey in which we might be able to influence and transform the nature of the standards of judgment that are used in the Academy to legitimate what counts as educational knowledge and theory.

What is this factor in our relationships that creates new insights between us?

I'm not sure that there is 'a factor' in our relationships that creates new insights between us. Returning to the 5 ideas above from an East Asian Epistemology of *Kizuki, Omoi, Takumi, Kizuna* and *Chi* (Appendix 2) from an East Asian Epistemology (Inoue, 2012) I think that they bear repeating:

Kizuki is a path to embrace mindfulness in our lives. *Omoi* is an integrate form of feeling, thinking, and passion developed by going through challenges and collective experiences that create *jikkan* or a gut feeling. *Takumi* implies a skill that involves deep wisdom on how to do things well in a professional practice, backed by long-term experience in the practice. *Kizuna* is created among people when they share the same experiences in the long run and go through important challenges in life together. It is more than just a friendship or an alliance between people. It is a stronger bond that often lasts one's lifetime and cannot be easily wiped away from one's memory. *Chi* (or *qi*), is a word that refers to the energy that sustains your life or the life force that motivates you to act in the world.

The idea of *Kizuki* is of a path that creates new insights or world views. I can appreciate from a perspective of 'relational knowing' that both *Chi* as a life-affirming energy and *Omoi* as an integrated form of feeling, thinking and passion can be influential in creating new insights. As I develop my understanding of 'relational knowing' with you I can recognize the importance of *Chi, Omoi* and *Kizuki*.

What are these qualities in the other that bears the potential of bringing me into presence?

I think that you have begun to answer this question when you write (Appendix 1)

We do know there is a kind of relational knowing inspiring our thoughts as well as emotions, a kind of knowing consisting of our professional knowledge and something in our personalities that I believe has not been seen as knowledge, and definitely not academic knowledge. Jack talks about life affirming energy as the way we live our values in the service of the humanly good (you say this much more elegantly...). Our values are presented through our actions, and hence our values are incorporated in our relational knowing. Values probably cannot be regarded as knowledge, but values that are conscious to us are guiding our actions. I find in my practice that when I have declared the values I want to be held accountable for (to use Jack's terms), it is not just that my values are being presented through my actions, my actions are sometimes changed (improved) by the thought of my values, and my wish of not living in contradiction to those values. So then, the values and the conscious awareness of the values are guiding my actions. Furthermore the values and the awareness of the values may lead to development of embodied qualities as patience, empathy, sincere interest in the other, openness to the creative possibilities of difference, trust, passion, the courage to take risks, the willingness to go alongside, the wish to see the other as the unique human being she is ... (these were some of the qualities being mentioned in the group last night, and some I thought of). And I wonder if all this might actually lead to a more loving encounter that again will further affirm the other and hence have the potential of the other coming into presence.

I think that we could explore this further by sustaining our conversations and encounters in which we help ourselves and each other to live and evolve as fully as possible, in enquiries into improving our influence with **embodied qualities of patience, empathy, sincere interest in the other, openness to the creative possibilities of difference, trust, passion, the courage to take risks, the willingness to go alongside, the wish to see the other as the unique human being she is ... (these were some of the qualities being mentioned in the group last night, and some I thought of).**

We do co-create not only our lives, but *who we become*. Our relations are that important. As educators of teachers, how can we address these issues? How can we emphasize the *relational knowing* and development of this kind of knowledge or qualities?

I think that we are addressing these issues in our enquiries of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?' As we work with others to live the values of humanity (such as those you refer to above) and produce our 'validated' explanations of our educational influences, I believe that we are co-creating our lives in the sense of who we are becoming.

I also believe that we can emphasize the significance of relational knowing by clarifying and evolving our meanings of relational knowing in our accounts in which we are explaining our educational influences in learning. I believe that we can emphasize its significance by contributing to the legitimation of relational knowing as

a recognizable epistemological contribution in the Academy. We could contribute to this by clarifying our meanings of relational knowing and provided evidence of its usefulness in our own living theory accounts and in the living theory accounts of others.

I know you have worked on the epistemology for a long time, but first now, in the afterthought of our wonderful conversations these past days did I realize the full meaning of that: a living epistemology exploring and trying to come closer to these kinds of relational knowing that lives between us and inspire us to put our gifts out in the world in the hope of contributing to humanity in the world. And how can this knowing evolve in us and between us?

I believe that this knowing is evolving in us and between us through our encounters, conversations and receptive responsiveness to each others' enquiries. I feel that we are inspiring each other (see the first image above) to develop our talents and put our gifts out in the world in the hope of contributing to the well-being of humanity. We could, for instance, work with the values you describe below when you write:

Furthermore the values and the awareness of the values may lead to development of embodied qualities as patience, empathy, sincere interest in the other, openness to the creative possibilities of difference, trust, passion, the courage to take risks, the willingness to go alongside, the wish to see the other as the unique human being she is ... (these were some of the qualities being mentioned in the group last night, and some I thought of).

We could raise the possibility with the Thursday evening group and with the practitioner-researcher group that we engage in a co-operative enquiry to explore how to live these values as fully as possible. I'll drop a note to both the Thursday evening group and the practitioner-researcher group to see how people respond to this suggestion.

Relational knowing, with values of hope for the humane future of the world, is sustainable knowing (related to social sustainability, which is seen together with cultural, economic and environmental sustainability). How can this knowing best be studied and explored?

I'm not sure that we can answer a question about the 'best way' or 'best practice'. I think that we can enquire into improving a present practice. We could ask each other and ask others how we could improve our relational knowing in seeking to live as fully as possible the values that carry hope for the future of humanity (including those you identified in your letter of the 6th July 2012 (Appendix 1).

Do we need language to describe this kind of knowledge?

I have always valued the development of language that aids my thinking and understandings. Sometimes my thinking could not develop with the development of my language. For example, the ideas of Ilyenkov (1977) on Dialectical Logic helped

me to see my 'I' as a 'living contradiction' as I watched video-clips of my classroom practice. My language of action-reflection cycles helps me to clarify the meanings of my values in the course of their emergence through practice. Buber's poetic language in his book *I and Thou* and his description of the relation in education in his book on 'Between Man and Man' helped me to think about educational relationships in terms of I-You relations. Vasilyuk's (1991) description of the lack of understanding of relationships between meaning and energy and energy and values in 'The energy paradigm' helped me to focus on the importance of energy-flowing values in explanations of educational influence. Rayner's (2005) ideas of inclusionality as a relationally dynamic awareness of space and boundaries as connective, reflective and co-creative, helped me to focus on the development of a relationally dynamic epistemology. Your idea of 'relational knowing' is helping me to focus on the co-creation of the meanings of 'relational knowing' and its significance in explanations of educational influence. So, I would say that language is very important in the development of 'relational knowing'. As I write this I am aware of a mystery at the heart of my experience and understanding of 'relational knowing'. The mystery is focused on the source of the flow of life-affirming energy. I can feel that I am part of a pooling of the cosmological flow of this energy. I recognize its significance in sustaining my motivation in what I am doing. I also recognize that the source is a mystery that is probably beyond my comprehension. Hence I am aware of a non-verbal affirmation of this life-affirming energy that seems to me to be beyond language.

Relational knowing is “fluid”, and we don't have a very well developed language for it. Some of its qualities are/can be captured on video. But because we don't know what to look for many of us still don't recognize the qualities that you can grasp, Jack. So I still depend on you to tell me what it is that you see. When we are coming closer to words/descriptions it might be easier for more people to recognize the important educational qualities, and hence paying more attention to them.

What good would it do to have language to describe it?

I think that we can explore this question as we work at developing a language to communicate the meanings and significance of 'relational knowing' within an enquiry in which we are seeking to enhance our influences for good. I believe that we are both enquiring in ways and within contexts that we wish to influence in terms of enhancing the flow of values and understandings that carry hope for the future of humanity. We could reform the question into something like, 'What good are we doing as we work at developing a language to describe (our) relational knowing?' or 'How do we enhance the good we are doing with relational knowing?'

My own feeling about the good that we could do, by developing a language of relational knowing, is that it could enhance the opportunities for individuals to fulfill a mutual responsibility to share their explanations of how they are holding themselves accountable for living the values of humanity as fully as possible.

These are all questions to be explored... Relational knowing is “fluid”, and we don't have a very well developed language for it. Some of its qualities are/can be captured on video. But because we don't know what to look for many of us still don't recognize the qualities that you can grasp, Jack. So I still depend on you to

tell me what it is that you see. When we are coming closer to words/descriptions it might be easier for more people to recognize the important educational qualities, and hence paying more attention to them.

I think that this helps to answer the previous question in the recognition that getting closer to communicable words/descriptions might make it easier for more people to recognize the important educational qualities and hence to pay more attention to them in their workplace contexts, in enquiries that are guided by a desire to live as fully as possible the values that carry hope for the future of humanity.

We do know there is a kind of relational knowing inspiring our thoughts as well as emotions, a kind of knowing consisting of our professional knowledge and something in our personalities that I believe has not been seen as knowledge, and definitely not academic knowledge. Jack talks about life affirming energy as the way we live our values in the service of the humanly good (you say this much more elegantly...). Our values are presented through our actions, and hence our values are incorporated in our relational knowing. Values probably cannot be regarded as knowledge, but values that are conscious to us are guiding our actions. I find in my practice that when I have declared the values I want to be held accountable for (to use Jack's terms), it is not just that my values are being presented through my actions, my actions are sometimes changed (improved) by the thought of my values, and my wish of not living in contradiction to those values. So then, the values and the conscious awareness of the values are guiding my actions. Furthermore the values and the awareness of the values may lead to development of embodied qualities as patience, empathy, sincere interest in the other, openness to the creative possibilities of difference, trust, passion, the courage to take risks, the willingness to go alongside, the wish to see the other as the unique human being she is ... (these were some of the qualities being mentioned in the group last night, and some I thought of). And I wonder if all this might actually lead to a more loving encounter that again will further affirm the other and hence have the potential of the other coming into presence.

Heron and Reason (2008) present the notions of experiential knowing, presentational knowing, propositional knowing and practical knowing. I think relational knowing is missing here, and probably is incorporated in practical knowing, but they have not (as far as I know) emphasized the relational knowing. (I don't have the book here to check though). I really like the notion of *knowing* though as something being dynamic instead of "what is". When starting to define relational knowing it might, as Marie said this morning; become static and thus lose its dynamics. But hopefully not... In one way or other, even if video is the only way to present this kind of qualities, we need ways to "read" the images so that it gives meaning and can contribute to our learning.

In our relational knowing, I see our values as explanatory principles that can explain why we are doing what we are doing. I think that 'knowing' our values is of fundamental importance in questions of the kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?', because our values motivate us to improve what is going on, and help us to evaluate our influence in contributing to desired changes.

I think that you have contributed a most significant understanding of these values when you write:

So then, the values and the conscious awareness of the values are guiding my actions. Furthermore the values and the awareness of the values may lead to development of embodied qualities as patience, empathy, sincere interest in the other, openness to the creative possibilities of difference, trust, passion, the courage to take risks, the willingness to go alongside, the wish to see the other as the unique human being she is ... (these were some of the qualities being mentioned in the group last night, and some I thought of). And I wonder if all this might actually lead to a more loving encounter that again will further affirm the other and hence have the potential of the other coming into presence.

I'm smiling with the pleasure of this insight and I feel fully present as I read the above paragraph. I'd like to work with you on see what we can do to live these values as fully as we can as we develop and share our understandings of relational knowing.

I'll pause here for any responses you'd like to make. I'm hoping to make a transcript from the above video-tape and then to communicate more of my understanding of 'relational knowing' with the help of a process of 'empathetic resonance' as I respond to what I experience as the expression of the meanings of the values you describe above.

Love Jack – 10th July 2012

Appendix 1

Relational knowing – a Living Theory epistemology Sigrid Gjøtterud - 6th July 2012

Hattie's <xx> studies show that the number one factor in children's learning is the teacher. What is it in the learner-teacher relationship that is so important for learning? What kind of knowledge does the teacher possess that inspires the learner? What is this factor in our relationships that creates new insights between us? What are these qualities in the other that bears the potential of bringing me into presence <Biesta>? We do co-create not only our lives, but *who we become*. Our relations are that important. As educators of teachers, how can we address these issues? How can we emphasize the *relational knowing* and development of this kind of knowledge or qualities? I know you have worked on the epistemology for a long time, but first now, in the afterthought of our wonderful conversations these past days did I realize the full meaning of that: a living epistemology exploring and trying to come closer to these kinds of relational knowing that lives between us and inspire us to put our gifts out in the world in the hope of contributing to humanity in the world. And how can this knowing evolve in us and between us? Relational knowing, with values of hope for the humane future of the world, is sustainable knowing (related to social sustainability, which is seen together with cultural, economic and environmental sustainability).

How can this knowing best be studied and explored? Do we need language to describe this kind of knowledge? What good would it do to have language to describe it? These are all questions to be explored... Relational knowing is "fluid", and we don't have a very well developed language for it. Some of its qualities are/can be captured on video. But because we don't know what to look for many of us still don't recognize the qualities that you can grasp, Jack. So I still depend on you to tell me what it is that you see. When we are coming closer to words/descriptions it might be easier for more people to recognize the important educational qualities, and hence paying more attention to them.

We do know there is a kind of relational knowing inspiring our thoughts as well as emotions, a kind of knowing consisting of our professional knowledge and something in our personalities that I believe has not been seen as knowledge, and definitely not academic knowledge. Jack talks about life affirming energy as the way we live our values in the service of the humanly good (you say this much more elegantly...). Our values are presented through our actions, and hence our values are incorporated in our relational knowing. Values probably cannot be regarded as knowledge, but values that are conscious to us are guiding our actions. I find in my practice that when I have declared the values I want to be held accountable for (to use Jack's terms), it is not just that my values are being presented through my actions, my actions are sometimes changed (improved) by the thought of my values, and my wish of not living in contradiction to those values. So then, the values and the conscious awareness of the values are guiding my actions. Furthermore the values and the awareness of the values may lead to development of embodied qualities as patience, empathy, sincere interest in the other, openness to the creative possibilities of difference, trust, passion,

the courage to take risks, the willingness to go alongside, the wish to see the other as the unique human being she is ... (these were some of the qualities being mentioned in the group last night, and some I thought of). And I wonder if all this might actually lead to a more loving encounter that again will further affirm the other and hence have the potential of the other coming into presence.

Heron and Reason <2008> present the notions of experiential knowing, presentational knowing, propositional knowing and practical knowing. I think relational knowing is missing here, and probably is incorporated in practical knowing, but they have not (as far as I know) emphasized the relational knowing. (I don't have the book here to check though). I really like the notion of *knowing* though as something being dynamic instead of "what is". When starting to define relational knowing it might, as Marie said this morning; become static and thus lose its dynamics. But hopefully not... In one way or other, even if video is the only way to present this kind of qualities, we need ways to "read" the images so that it gives meaning and can contribute to our learning.

Appendix 2

Descriptions of Kizuki, Omoi, Takumi, Kizuna and Chi from Noriyuki Inoue's (2012) book 'Mirrors of the Mind'

Kizuki - *Kizuki* is a path to embrace mindfulness in our lives. In every moment of your life, you can find ample opportunities for developing new *kizuki*. This happens whether or not you belong to Japanese culture. If it happens, you come to see the world with a new perspective from your experiences and (17) your personal theories are newly developed and improved. *Kizuki* brings a death to the old worldview, and generates a new perspective in your mind. (pp. 17-18)

Omoi - The direct translation of *omoi* is thinking, but thinking itself does not capture the depth of this concept. *Omoi* is an integrate form of feeling, thinking, and passion developed by going through challenges and collective experiences that create *jikkan* or a gut feeling. *Omoi* defines who you are and what you are up to, and being in touch with your *omoi* helps you to be true to yourself. (p. 20)

Takumi - When the term *takumi* is used by Japanese, people often assume that it implies a skill that involves deep wisdom on how to do things well in a professional practice, backed by long-term experience in the practice. It involves deep insights on diverse aspects of the practice as well as experience-backed perspectives of the professional practice that have endured the test of time. When a person with *takumi* works on a professional practice, the person goes beyond explicitly describable set procedures and blueprints with a deep understanding of various aspects of the practice.....

As an educator your role involves not only developing your own *takumi* as an educator but also helping students develop academic knowledge and skills in the ways that lead them toward acquisition of *takumi* in the subject area you are teaching. (pp. 56-57)

Ba - is a Japanese term often used in everyday communication referring to the communicate space for co-developing a new understanding. *Ba* is co-constructed by the participants in the communicate space with an understanding that it is for engaging in organic dialogues and co-constructing a new understanding (or *kizuki*) of the targeted issue with others. In Japanese contexts, practice improvement and collaborations are often done by assuming such opportunities as *ba* (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). (p. 92)

Kizuna means an enduring bond between people. *Kizuna* is created among people when they share the same experiences in the long run and go through important challenges in life together. It is more than just a friendship or an alliance between people. It is a stronger bond that often lasts one's lifetime and cannot be easily wiped away from one's memory. When *kizuna* is built with others, you open up yourself beyond a socially acceptable persona and expose your weakness, drawbacks, problems and dilemmas. Once *kizuna* is created, you have a strong sense that you really know the person and become firmly connected with that person (Nakayama, 1993). (p. 161)

Chi (or *qi*), is a word that refers to the energy that sustains your life or the life force that motivates you to act in the world. This concept is shared in many Asian cultures and has slightly different names such as *ki* (Japanese), *gi* (Korean) and *khi* (Vietnamese). *Chi* is believed to have originated in the nature world, and any living being contains some *chi* as it takes in foods, water, and air that exists in nature. *Chi* flows within our bodies and throughout the universe. We can stay physically and mentally healthy when our body has a good flow of chi connected to the world. Consequently, *chi* plays a central concept in the practices of Chinese medicine, acupuncture, martial arts, Feng Shui, and other traditional practices in East Asian cultures. In fact, the Japanese word for motivation is *yaru ki* for which the literal translation is *chi* for action (i.e., *yaru* means to act, and *ki* means *chi*). The assumed role of *chi* in motivation is built into the cultural epistemology in terms of its use in everyday communication. (pp. 135-136)

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